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ABSTRACT

A variety of information and sources for information on child sexual assault are collected in this document geared for educators in small communities. Materials include a fact sheet on small community concerns about sexual abuse, a flow chart for training school personnel in intervention and prevention, suggestions for school protocol for reporting child abuse/assault, role play situations for elementary and secondary teachers, myth/fact sheets about sexual assault, and guidelines for responding to a child's disclosure of sexual assault. The discussion of small community concerns covers four issues: (1) reporting child sexual abuse when the reporter cannot remain anonymous; (2) small community attitudes toward intervention; (3) lack of response by authorities to reports of suspected assault; and (4) support for children whose protection involves removing them from the home or community. Suggested school protocol for reporting child sexual assault includes the formation of a core group of three staff members trained in intervenion in child sexual assault cases and responsible for consistent reporting procedures. Selected bibliographies on child sexual assault and incest include 21 books for children and 8 books for parents. (JHZ)

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CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT IN RURAL ALASKA - ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

ALASKA SMALL SCHOOLS CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 24, 1985

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SMALL COMMUNITY CONCERNS ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT

FEAR OF REPORTING:

Within a small community or school it is impossible to make a report regarding child sexual assault and remain anonymous. However, procedures should be established to protect an individual's job and integrity within the community.

FISH BOWL EFFECT:

One of the inherent problems of living and working in a small community is that everyone knows what everyone else is doing. People become reluctant to make official reports regarding someone else's behavior. An attitude of "live and let live" develops, often to an extreme, and consequently intervention does not occur.

NO RESPONSE TO REPORT:

Sometimes concerned individuals make a report of suspected child sexual assault to a person in authority and nothing happens. For what ever reasons, action is not taken by responsible parties following the report. As a result, individuals may become reluctant to step forward since "nothing will happen anyway." The failure to respond on the part of the authorities may cause apathy and reports of suspected child sexual assault may cease.

CHILD IS REMOVED:

Frequently when a report of child sexual assault has been made to the Department of Social Services, the child is removed from the home. This is to prevent any further abuse or threat of physical harm from occuring. While this does not always seem to be best for the child, it is the easiest and quickest way to protect him/her. The child is allowed to remain at home only if the alleged assailant is removed at once. This allows the authorities to perform a more thorough investigation.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The first step is to accept the fact that it is impossible to remain anonymous when making this kind or report, especially in a small community. It is state law that professionals who work with children report any suspected cases of child sexual assault. A protocol should be established within the schools and the community so that a definite procedure exists to handle such cases. In a small community it is beneficial to diffuse the reporting procedure as much as possible to protect the individuals involved. It is imperative that individuals not be put into a situation where they fear for their jobs or well being as a result of making such a report.

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There is no way to avoid the "fish bowl effect" of small communities. Although it is state law that professionals report any suspicions of child sexual assault, the motivation to report comes from an individuals moral obligation to protect the child. A person has to have the personal conviction that it is wrong and something needs to be done about it. There is no way to avoid public scrutiny in a small town, but it is possible to bring about positive changes.

Filing a formal report and getting no reponse is very frustrating. As with any system there needs to be a follow up to ensure that the child will be protected. If there is a lack of response from the proper authorities, it is advisable to follow the chain of command and make a report to someone else in a supervisory position. This is time consuming but must be done until someone takes proper action.

Having a child removed from the home or community can be very traumatic, especially for the child. Since this is the way the child will be protected, it is important that the child have as much support as possible. Often the child will feel that he/she is being punished and must receive reassurance that they are not to blame. The childs needs should always come first.

The best way to prevent child sexual assault is through awareness. Children need to be informed of potentially dangerous situations and need to be educated regarding inappropriate touching. Children also need instruction on how they can protect themselves from potential abuse and what actions they can take when any unwanted or inappropriate touching occurs.

Community resources are an important factor when dealing with the problem of sexual assault. Members of the community should make use of all potentially helpful individuals who can be of assistance when dealing with this problem. The efforts of all individuals concerned should be coordinated so that the childs welfare is the most important goal. The best way to achieve community involvement and awareness is through education. Local meetings should be held to inform commmunity members of the problems of child sexual assault, what resources are available, what materials are appropriate to use with young children and how they can help prevent child sexual assault in their community - local community leaders can have a great impact on mobilizing the efforts of concerned citizens in dealing with this pervasive problem.

For more information contact your local DV/SA center or call S.T.A.R. at

276-7279 business

276-STAR
7827 24 hr. crisis

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SUGGESTIONS FOR PROTOCOL
SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Areas to consider when designing a school protocol for reporting child abuse/ child sexual assault to the Division of Family and Youth Services:

1.) The method needs to be effective ensuring that a child's disclosure reaches the Division of Family and Youth Services.

2.) The method needs to offer assistance to those personnel who are uncomfortable reporting.

3.) The method needs to provide an opportunity for school personnel questioning behaviors or symptoms to discuss their suspicions with trained personnel.

4.) The method should ensure that a report is made if any one person feels it needs to be.

5.) A protocol needs to assure all parties that a report was completed. (A teacher's legal responsibility does not end with reporting to a school administrator. A teacher would likely feel inhibited in asking if a report was made due to their positions.)

With these conditions in mind a suggestion for protocol follows:

A core group that includes approximately three individuals who volunteer to be the reporting personnel for the school. These individuals could include teachers, nurses, counselors, and possibly administrators who are trained in identifying and intervening in child abuse/child sexual assault. Having three individuals would allow the disclosing party (teacher or other school personnel) to go to the person in that group whom they felt most comfortable with. After discussing the situation, the reporting personnel would call DFYS in the presence of the disclosing party ensuring them their legal responsibility was completed. The reporting person would give a written statement to administration of the incident informing them as well as enabling them to keep statistics within their school.

A core person may or may not need to speak with the child/adolescent. It would depend on how the disclosure was dealt with initially. It is important that the child/adolescent know what to expect, i.e. a social worker from DFYS is going to help them.

Advantages to this protocol:

1.) A core group offers assistance in reporting to those personnel who are uncomfortable doing so.

2.) Having three individuals in the core group offers school personnel a choice in whom they discuss the situation with.

3.) A core group as opposed to one person handling child abuse/child sexual assault would help prevent burnout.

4.) It provides an opportunity for personnel questioning behaviors or symptoms to discuss their concerns with a trained person.

5.) The individual from the core group would be required to make a report if any individual reporting to them felt it necessary.

6.) Consistent reporting personnel would establish a positive rapport with DFYS. This would increase the liklihood of shared information and improved communication between agencies enhancing school personnel feelings about reporting.

7.) This method helps protect the child by allowing the legally mandated agency to investigate in suspected child abuse/child sexual assault cases. (It is inappropriate for school personnel to contact a parent and discuss a child's disclosure of abuse. This puts the child in danger and shatters their trust in having disclosed.)

8.) This method provides checks and balances ensuring all individuals a report was made.

9.) Having a core group ensures at least one person in the school at all times trained to intervene in child abuse/child sexual assault.

ROLE PLAYS - ELEMENTARY AGE

Note: In each role play geared for teachers of Elementary grades, the tasks are to decide the approach, establish communication and handle the disclosure.

1) A child does not want to go home. He/She shows increased nervousness as the school day ends. When asked what is wrong, he/she tells you an uncle who is staying with them is sexually abusing him/her.

2) A boy in the class (first-third grade) does not want to use the bathroom when the older boys are there. When asked about it, he tells you that he is being sexually abused by his male, teen-aged cousin.

3) A child in you class is very withdrawn. It is hard to build rapport with him/her. He/She does not play well with other children and draws away from attention and physical touch. When your class studies personal safety regarding sexual assault, the child gets very upset.

4) Everyone in your class is getting excited about going to fish camp except one student. When asked why, he/she tells you that every year at camp he/she is sexually assaulted by the person he/she shares a tent with.

5) A student in your class tells you one morning that on the previous evening his/her parents were out visiting friends while his/her older brother and his friends were at home drinking. One of the brother friends had sexual contact with him/her. None of the older boys seemed concerned.

6) One day in school you notice all the student whispering and acting worked up about something but no one tells you what it is. One student in particular though is acting very quiet and withdrawn. After school this student stays late and tells you that over the weekend someone invited him/her to ride on the sno-go to a storage shed to see some new puppies. When in the shed the child was sexually assaulted by this older person but he/she says he/she has to keep it a secret. All the other students at school seem to know who it was.

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ROLE PLAYS - ADOLESCENTS

Note: In each role play geared for teachers of adolescent students, the tasks are to decide the approach, establish communication and effectively handle the disclosure.

1) A girl in your class seems like she is trying to deal with a serious problem. She used to be a good student, but her grades have dropped markedly. Although she has always been rather quiet, she seems more and more withdrawn. She finally tells you that her mother's boyfriend who lives with them is sexually abusing her. She pleads with you not to tell anyone about it.

2) Your class has just had a discussion or presentation about sexual assault issues. Afterwards, a girl/boy comes up to you and tells you that a "friend" has had that happen to him/her by his/her father. The more you talk about it, the more you suspect who the "friend" really is.

3) A girl in your class is absent for a few days. When she returns to school she doesn't seem to be her usual, happy self. She finally tells you:

   a) She was at a party and had been drinking. Two guys who were there had taken advantage of her and forced her to have sex with them.

   b) Her boyfriend forced her to "make love" with him. They had done some heavy kissing and petting on previous dates, so now she thinks that maybe what happened is all her fault.

4) A young girl in your class had gone to Anchorage to visit relatives. While in Anchorage she accepted a ride with a stranger and was sexually assaulted. The principal of your school accidently found out about the incident from someone in Anchorage and has told you about it. She is returning to school this week. What will you say to this student when she returns? How can you establish a comfortable environment for her? What other information would you need to help her deal with this problem?

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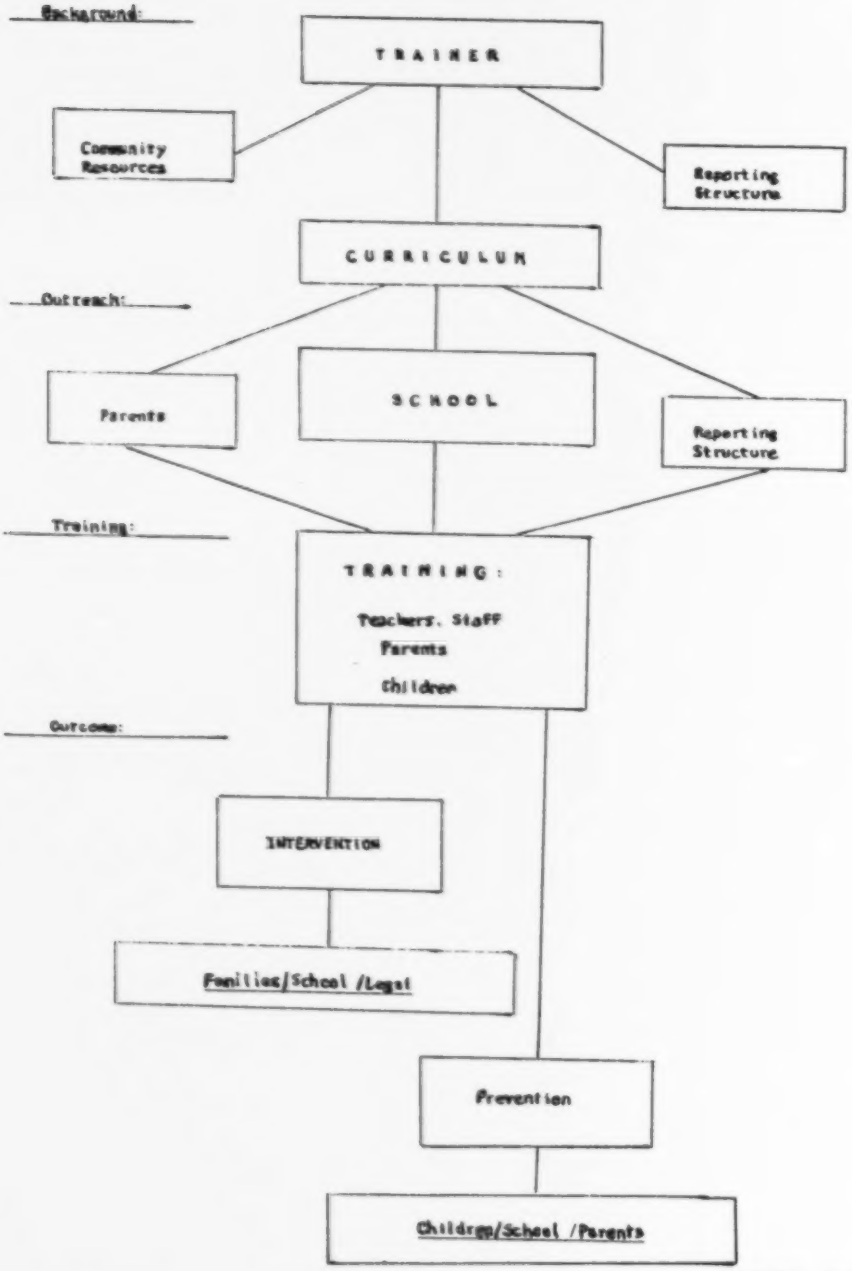
CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SCHOOLS - FLOW CHART



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INFORMATION ON

CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT

(YOUNG CHILDREN/ADOLESCENT)

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE/INCEST
MYTH AND FACT SHEET

MYTH: Child sexual assault is a violent act resulting in sexual penetration

FACT: Child sexual assault involves forced or tricked sexual contact and other sexual activities including peeping, exposing and child pornography, by an older person to a child.

MYTH: Child sexual assault/incest is rare.

FACT: Child sexual assault/incest is more prevalent in our society than we realize. Current statistics show that 1 out of 3 girls and 1 out of 8 boys will experience some type of sexual assault before they reach age 18.

MYTH: Most offenders are strangers to the child.

FACT: 75-90% of offenders are known to the child - parent guardian, other relative, babysitter or friend of the family - who take advantage of an established position of trust and the child's dependancy on adults.

MYTH: Females sexually abuse children as often as males.

FACT: Female offenders are rarely reported. Over 90% of all reports involve a male offender.

MYTH: Child sexual assault victims are accosted out of doors or in public places.

FACT: Most assaults occur in the home of the victim or the home of the offender.

MYTH: Children provoke sexual assault and are at fault.

FACT: Children do not have the ability or power to give informed consent. Young children have no life experience that enables them to fantasize about having sexual contact with adults. The adult is the person with the distorted perception who exploits the child's need for attention and affection. It is the responsibility of the adult to make sure boundries are not crossed.

MYTH: It is damaging and dangerous to give information about sexual assault to children.

FACT: Children who are informed and knowledgable are much less likely to be victimized. Education can only serve to give children the information needed to protect themselves from sexual abuse; whether the offender is a stranger or an aquaintence.

MYTH: Child sexual abuse/incest is usually a "one time deal".

FACT: Child sexual abuse/incest is part of a situation that develops gradually and is recurring. (Incestuous relationships usually last for years).

MYTH: Mothers always know and are , therefore, responsible when incest occurs.

FACT: Most mothers don't know. The incestuous contacts may occur when the mother is not at home. Since incest is shrouded in "secrecy", often the offender and the child are the only persons aware of the incestuous relationship.

MYTH: The offender is a sick person.

FACT: Most offenders, when admiistered psychological tests, show normal on test results.

For further information, call S.T.A.R. 276-STAR(7827) or 276-7279

CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT/YOUNG CHILDREN
INDICATORS

Children often do not verbalize that they are being sexually abused. Reasons for this are varied and include:

-feelings of guilt or shame

-fear they won't be believed

-fear they will be punished by their parents

-fear of harm to themselves or family members

-fear of the family breaking up or losing the affection of the offender

-lack of vocabulary to express what has happened to them

-lack of knowledge about sexual assault

Sometimes children feel that they have told. They might say:

-"I don't like Mr. Smith"

-"I don't want to go to Grandpa's anymore"

-"Mr. Adams has funny underwear"

-"I have a secret I can't tell anyone"

Adults need to explore these types of statements further.

Most often, the telling is done through behavior changes. Some indicators of sexual abuse include:

-a reluctance to go to a particular place or be with a particular person

-a child showing an unusual interest in the genitals of other people or animals. they may try to express affection inappropriately, such as 'French Kissing' or fondling another's genitals

-imitating sexual play that is beyond their developmental stage

-lots of new fears - clinging to a parent, needing more assurance than usual

-regressing; returning to younger, more babyish behaviors

-acting seductive - this behavior has been learned and rewarded

-sleep disturbances - nightmares, bedwetting, fear of going to bed, fear of sleeping alone

-loss of appetite or a sudden increase in appetite

-irritability, crankiness, behavior out of normal range

-suddenly turning against one parent

Call S.T.A.R. 276-STAR (7827) crisis
276-7279 business

Some physical indicators are:

- having V.D. they caught it from someone
- complaining of sore genitals or bottom
- redness or swelling of the genitals
- recurring infections

recurring stomach aches/head aches without medical explanation

For further information contact S.T.A.R. at 276-STAR (7827)

276-7279 business

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE/ADOLESCENT INDICATORS

1. Venereal Disease
2. Pregnancy

With both V.D. and pregnancy, an adolescent needs to be asked certain questions. Ask them about the father of the child. Ask when they and their partner used birth control. If the pregnancy is the result of incest, the adolescent may say, "I don't know who the father is", "We didn't go all the way" or "I never had sex". Be especially aware if the student has no apparent peer relationship.

3. Extreme avoidance of touch
4. No sense of personal boundries
5. Hinting at a secret they can't tell
6. Not wanting to go home
7. Running away
8. Identifying themselves as "special" within the family. Example:"My dad likes me the most. He spends more time with me than my brother and sister. I get to go on trips with him and no one else does."
9. Frequent absences from school - especially if one parent writes most of the excuses for school
10. Change in school performance
11. Acting out. Example:Alcohol and drug abuse, promiscuity
12. Seductive behavior- this behavior has been learned and rewarded
13. Frequent sexual agenda. Example: He's really coming on to me", "He's hot for me"
14. Unusual or bizarre sexual themes in artwork or writing
15. Reason to believe that an adolescent is involved in prostitution
16. Poor relationship with their peers
17. Drug and alcohol abuse
18. Fear of a particular person
19. Fear of men or boys
20. Poor self image - acting withdrawn, hiding behind their hair or refusal to remove coat, closed body posture, extreme ranges in the amount of make-up used
21. It is not uncommon for children of any age to develop sleep disturbances such as nightmares and fear of sleeping alone.
22. Changes in eating patterns/appetite

INDICATOR: ADOLESCENT
PAGE TWO

23. May need more reassurance than usual

24. Great deal of concern about friends reactions to them

25. Shallow relationships with the opposite sex and clingy in those relationships

26. Acting older than their age-also acting adult with other adults

27. Overprotective of one parent

28. Depression and suicidal threats

For further information, call S.T.A.R. 276-STAR (7827) crisis
276- 7279 business

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE
MINIMUM RESPONSE TO DISCLOSURE

It is a fact that sexual assault is a difficult subject to talk about. We all have personal boundries and experiences that affect our ability to deal with a disclosure of abuse from a child. The following is the minimum a person should do if they are uncomfortable talking to a child.

1. Reassure the child that you are glad they told and that telling was the right thing to do.

2. Tell them that you are sorry that this happened to them and that it is not their fault.

3. Be aware of your body language and of your own feelings. Label your feelings. If you feel angry, tell the child, "It makes me angry that this happened to you". This way, the child will not sense your anger and think it is directed at her/him. Try not to let your own fear or anger get in the way of helping the child.

4. Do not make promises you can't keep. The child may have to see the offender again; you may not be able to protect her/him from another assault; and you do have to tell someone about the problem.

5. Tell the child that you are unsure of how to help, but you know a person who can. Explain that the person you would like them to talk with is someone who understands these problems very well and knows what to do. Go with the child to the person and make a transition or stay with the child until the person is available.

6. REPORT

This covers dealing with a direct disclosure. If you see indicators of possible abuse or hear statements that raise suspicion, it is your responsibility to report the suspicion to the Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS) at 276-1450.

It is not your responsibility to investigate these situations or judge if they are founded or not.

For further information call S.T.A.R. at 276-STAR (7827) 24 hour crisis
or
276-7279 business

NOTE: WAYS A CHILD REPORTS SEXUAL ABUSE:

1.) Direct report- child reports the abuse directly to a teacher, counselor, nurse, or other person in authority.

2.) Indirect report- child tells friends hoping they will report to authority for them.

3.) Disguised report- "I know a person...."

4.) Child tells a teacher or counselor but makes them promise they won't tell. (Child is attempting to shift responsibility for report so someone else but still wants intervention.)

S.T.A.R.'s Selected Bibliography for Children

(* Available for purchase from S.T.A.R.)

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For Parents

(*Available for Purchase fromS.T.A.R.)

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MATERIALS PRICE LIST

Discussion Guide for "Better Safe Than Sorry"		$ 6.00
Professional Training Manual on Sexual Assault		10.00
"I'm Working Against Sexual Assault" Buttons		2.00
"PLease Call Police" Banners		5.00
T-Shirts		10.00
Sweatshirts		15.00
Coloring Books:	"Red Flag, Green Flag People"	3.00
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Booklets:	"Come Tell Me Right Away"	1.50
	"He Told Me Not To Tell"	1.50
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	"The Better Safe Than Sorry Book"	5.00

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Producer: Richard Goldstein

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